

Singer's presence gives town 'pleasant' addition

By Cherie Krueger
Staff Reporter

Wally Pleasant is much like his music would lead his listeners to believe.

He is laid-back and not really serious about anything. The 27-year-old, who grew up in Detroit, has developed quite a following in Lincoln.

In between his two shows Monday night at Mudslide Slim's, 1418 O St., he joked about playing 10-cent games of Keno for hours and looking for the missing clue at the book depository in Dallas while he was there for a show.

Pleasant, whose real last name is Pleasantowski, has done shows at colleges, bars and coffee houses.

"I've been doing this kind of stuff for about six years or so. I've been playing the guitar for probably about 10 years, but I never wanted to be like Eddie Van Halen or anything," Pleasant said.

Before he began his career of singing offbeat folk music, he did go to college. He received a degree in political science at Michigan State, but realized that he could not really have

a regular job if he wanted to sing. "I'd like to get a job, but I'd have to take off for a while to do shows and stuff, and they tend to frown on that," he said.

Judging from the way large groups of teen-age girls flocked around him after his all-ages show, his female fans would be disappointed to hear that he is married and has been for the past three years.

His wife, Jennifer, comes with him to some of his shows, but she has not been with him on his current tour.

"I haven't seen her for about two months. She was with me when I went to California, but she stayed back in Michigan this time," Pleasant said.

He is just about to finish a two-month group of shows that included shows in Lincoln toward the beginning of the tour and again on Monday.

Pleasant said he spent a lot of time driving in his van (the dog curtains that cover the van's windows show a definite touch of his personality,) and used this time to write songs.

"Sometimes one sentence will go through my head, and I'll just try to build a song around that. A lot of times it happens when I'm driving," he said.

"It seems like a combination of driving, not much sleep the night before and coffee helps me come up with my songs."

He said he always was coming up with new songs and was thinking about doing a song about cowboys. He never has written a song about them and is trying to find the inspiration for one, he said.

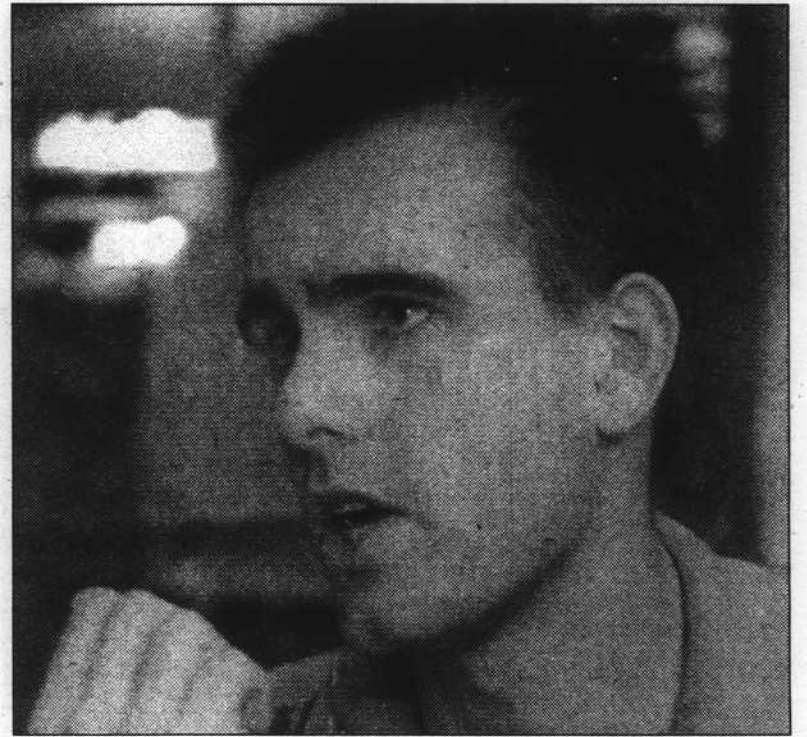
"I've thought about buying little cowboys to line up along the windows in my hotel room," he said. "I think that might help me."

"I'm working on this one song about a guy who wants a stalker," Pleasant said.

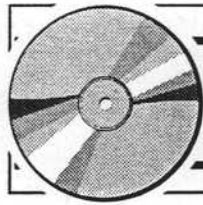
Pleasant, who plays in Lincoln frequently, said that outside of Dallas, Lincoln was one of his favorite places to play.

"Lincoln has a really nice downtown. I like the Rock 'N Roll Runza," he said. The Haymarket is nice, too, he said.

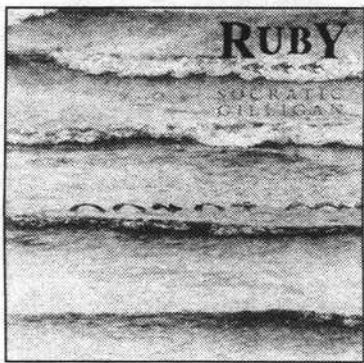
It seems to be obvious that Lincoln likes Wally Pleasant, and Wally Pleasant appears to like it here. His fans can be sure that he will be returning in the near future.



Cherie Krueger/DN
Satiric folk singer Wally Pleasant tries to explain a new song he is working on about a man who wants to have a stalker. Pleasant played two shows Monday night at Mudslide Slim's.



Music Reviews



Ruby
"Socratic Gilligan"
Little Man Running Music
Grade: B-

Ruby, who is probably in the midst of changing its name because of the R&B singer using the same name, is a Minneapolis-based band whose songwriting abilities strike either very close to home or very far away.

Formed by two brothers, Paul and Tim Frantzich, and bassist Tim

Johnson, with a changing list of drummers, Ruby has a very acoustic-based sound.

Two absolutely spectacular songs are the most ear-grabbing on the album. The first is "Blackbird Possessed." The lyrics are entrancing.

"I found a broken bone in southwest South Dakota/It once held the weight of the beautiful and the brave/There was water in the weather that day as far as I could see/As I walked the muddy road to

read the names upon the grave."

The second enrapturing song is the saddening "Memory," a song about loss and regret.

"I wish that I could live counter-clockwise/That would mean tomorrow I could tell you/That yesterday I saw an angel/Dancing just the way you do."

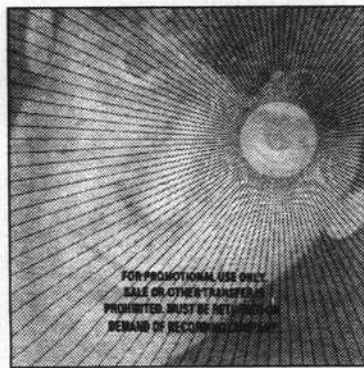
When the chorus swings in, the whole melody sweeps you away, and may even bring a tear to the eye.

"I've memorized your memory/

Now it's time for me to remove my heart/No matter where I go, no matter what I do I'm going to carry you with me/But now it's time for me to remove my heart."

The rest of the album is up and down, with both some good tracks and some tracks that aren't really great listening, but those two songs alone make this album worth owning.

— Cliff Hicks



Lou Reed
"Set The Twilight Reeling"
Warner Bros. Records
Grade: B-

A lot has happened since Lou Reed's last album, "Magic and Loss." And his new one, "Set The Twilight Reeling," reflects that.

"Magic and Loss" was released in 1992. In 1993, the Velvet Underground did a very brief reunion tour, resulting in a two-disc live set. In 1995, Velvet Underground's guitarist, Sterling Morrison, died and

shortly later, the Velvets were inducted into the Rock 'N' Roll Hall of Fame.

Somewhere along the line, Reed fell in love again.

"Set The Twilight Reeling" reflects all of that and more. It is 11 tracks that take you inside Reed's heart and mind and show you the world through his eyes.

The lyric songs are plentiful on "Set the Twilight Reeling," from the title track, in which Reed talks about the rebirth inside of himself, to the thought-provoking "Finish

Line," which is dedicated to Morrison.

The album really contrasts itself. "Trade In" and "Set the Twilight Reeling" back to back can get a bit repetitive because they share similar themes. But several other songs break them up.

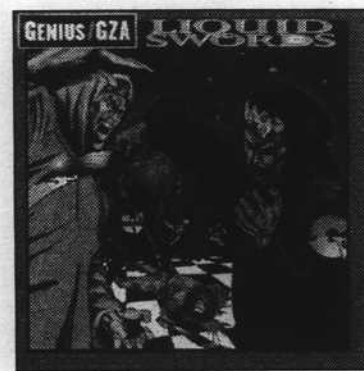
"NYC Man" and "Hang On To Your Emotions" are the most relaxed, and two of the best songs, off the album. The politically aggressive "Sex With Your Parents (Motherfucker)" is humorous the first few times around, but eventu-

ally it becomes relegated to one that can be skipped most times around.

Another song to pass on is "Hookywooky," which neither snags the ear nor the intellect. Luckily, it is followed by "The Proposition," which reflects on destiny and love.

"Set The Twilight Reeling" is a good album, although not as moving as "Magic and Loss," or as bitter as "New York." Still, the good is good enough to merit owning a copy.

— Cliff Hicks



Genius/Gza
"Liquid Swords"
Geffen
Grade: A

It is not lightly that I give the top grade available to an album. In fact, "Liquid Swords" is the first album I have reviewed to receive this honor.

But Genius, also known as Gza, has released one of the most impressive albums since the inception of the Wu-Tang Clan.

If you do not know what the Wu-

Tang Clan is, listen up. Nine hip-hop artists combine in one group and give us the most diverse crew ever to emerge in the rap scene.

Each member has his own style, lent to the whole. Genius had been dubbed the head of this creature.

Gza moves heads with knowledge and verbal assault. In his art, he is truly a master.

Check "Labels," the first single. Three minutes crammed full of every hip-hop record label he can think of packaged in a tight story-like form.

Because Gza is the only Wu member to have a previous solo album, he comes off with the wisdom of the ages. His perspective gives him what is needed to coordinate the aural mindscape.

"Liquid Swords" is a story within itself, but also reads like the fifth chapter of the Wu-Tang novel — the essence of the plot. Don't forget to read chapters one through four: Wu-Tang Clan's "Enter the Wu-Tang", Method Man's "Tical", Ol' Dirty Bastard's "Return to the 36 Chambers" and Raekwon's

"Only Built 4 Cuban Linx ..."

Gza's brother Rza carries the story through, taking simple snare and kick drum hits and melting them with crazy samples of horns, choirs and tiny sound effects. The end result mesmerizes you, forcing you to hit repeat to catch again what Gza said or what Rza looped.

Taken by itself, "Liquid Swords" is a great album. Taken as a whole, the Wu-Tang experience is a masterpiece.

— Greg Schick



Misfits
"Collection II"
Caroline Records
Grade: A+

The very best music elevates man's soul and makes him aware of the beauty of his humanity — and of his godliness.

Even as enthusiastic piety seizes those who hear Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or Handel's "Messiah," the Misfits' "Collection II" temporarily transforms the listener into a

grave-robbing viking.

Glenn Danzig, the mightily talented founder of the now-defunct band, compiled the songs, which include six rare tracks, two never-before-released tracks, three alternate versions, and eight others widely available.

The B-sides "Attitude" and "Ratfink" transmit blood lust. If the only version of the classic "Last Caress" you've heard is the Metallica cover, it's well worth \$15 to hear Danzig sing it. It's odd to think of

Metallica as understated, but the band is downright tasteful compared to Danzig, Satan's lounge singer.

The compilation also includes a lyrics sheet, which thrilled me.

Often Danzig is singing "aarr" or "whoaa," but not all the time, and it can be rough to grasp the specific message of his sensitive material. For instance, I don't think I ever would have figured out the "Bloodfeast" lyric "When it drips from the mouth be forewarned, be

prepared for a grizzly bloodfeast."

Every song on the album is comically vicious; these greasy, grimy guts songs represent the Misfits at its best, Danzig at his best, and rock music at its best.

The Misfits were great because they combined ferocious anger with amazingly good, if simple, melodies. "Collection II" is reason to take up your broadsword and merrily hack off heads — brain-eaters rejoice!!

— Kathleen Peistrup